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Report of the Secretary-General pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 1770 (2007)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 1770 (2007), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report to the Council on a quarterly basis on the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report is the fourth submitted pursuant to that resolution.

2. The report provides an update on United Nations activities in Iraq since the previous report (S/2008/266), dated 22 April 2008, with a continuing focus on the implementation of resolution 1770 (2007). It presents a summary of key political developments during the period under review, as well as regional and international events concerning Iraq. The report provides an update on the activities of my Special Representative for Iraq and on operational and security matters.

II. Summary of key political and security developments in Iraq

3. A combination of political and military efforts has contributed to continued improvements in security across Iraq during the past three months. Although civilian casualties as a result of violence remain unacceptably high, both the frequency of violent incidents and casualty figures have continued to decline and there has been increased cooperation from local communities in preventing acts of violence. The Iraqi Security Forces appear to be gaining in confidence and capability, and the number of units capable of taking the lead in operations is increasing. Following an operation in Basra, the Iraqi Security Forces commenced several major operations concurrently: Operation Peace began in May against renegade groups in the Sadr City area of Baghdad; Operation Promise of Peace started in June in the southern town of Amarah in Missan Province; and Operation Lion's Roar was launched against insurgent groups in Mosul and other parts of Ninawa Province. The ceasefire declared by Moqtada al-Sadr on 11 May for Sadr City continues to be in effect, and State authority and basic services are being restored in coordination with Sadr movement leaders.

4. These operations appear to be having a positive effect outside of the security arena as well. On 19 July, the largest Sunni bloc in the Iraqi Parliament, Tawafuq, ended a year-long boycott of the Government and officially rejoined Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki's Cabinet when Parliament approved six Sunni officials. Four

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members of the Shiite Unified Iraqi Alliance also joined the Cabinet in the place of Sadrist and Iraqi National List members of Parliament, who initiated a boycott in April and August 2007 respectively. On 29 April, more than 30 representatives from the main political and ethnic groups of Iraq held a reconciliation meeting in Helsinki under the auspices of a Finnish non-governmental organization and formulated principles for joint national action, as well as mechanisms for implementation. At a second meeting, held in Baghdad on 5 July, a set of principles agreed by the Iraqi leaders was announced.

5. Former Prime Minister Ibrahim Jafari established his own political party separate from Prime Minister Al-Maliki's Dawa Party at the end of May and was subsequently excluded from the Dawa Party. Since the departure of the Fadhilla Party and Sadrists from the United Iraqi Alliance in 2007, the status of the coalition in the upcoming elections remains uncertain. The Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq announced that it might run independently from the coalition in some provinces during the upcoming provincial elections. A fourth faction of the Sunni Tawafuq bloc was established in early May. A number of political groups have arisen from the tribal-based Awakening movement. The Sons of Al-Rafidayn party was also launched on 22 June by former Deputy Prime Minister Salam al-Zobai'e. These new groups have started to compete with existing Sunni parties in the political process. On 15 June, the Sadr movement declared it would not directly participate in the elections but would lend support to independent candidates.

6. The election law, which is vital for the preparation of provincial elections, faced a number of delays as a result of disagreements over the election system, the inclusion of women on the ballot and a proposed amendment to potentially delay provincial elections in Kirkuk pending further discussions on the status of Kirkuk. At the same time, however, on 20 May Turkoman representatives ended their 18-month boycott of the Kirkuk Provincial Council, and talks regarding power-sharing in other Kirkuk administration sectors are ongoing. The inclusion of a provision to ban political parties that have a militia resulted in extensive debate and contributed to early delays. Separately, a package of laws on hydrocarbons remained stalled between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan regional government. However on 29 June a committee comprising central and regional government representatives was formed to resolve outstanding differences on the hydrocarbon law.

7. UNAMI has been working to establish a process for addressing disputed internal boundaries. On 5 June, UNAMI presented to the Government of Iraq its initial analysis on the first four of several disputed areas in northern Iraq. In keeping with the Mission's advisory and assistance mandate under resolution 1770 (2007), the initial analysis examined a variety of considerations, including the administrative history of the district, changes since 2003, information obtained during visits to the districts and many additional factors. The findings pointed to a series of specific confidence-building measures that could contribute to the balanced administration of the districts under dispute. Working with the general agreement of the Presidency Council, the Prime Minister of Iraq and the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan regional government, UNAMI continued to underscore that the Government of Iraq alone has the sovereign responsibility to decide on the disputed areas.

8. Reactions to the Mission's first analysis reflected the sensitive nature of the issue. While some members of the Sunni Arab and Turkmen communities maintained a sceptical attitude towards addressing disputed territories at this time, Shiite political parties have chosen not to comment publicly to date. The Kurdish National Assembly and the Kurdistan regional government presidency issued official statements with reservations to the Mission's findings, and a Kurdistan regional government committee was formed to liaise with UNAMI on the issue. UNAMI has recently established a presence in Kirkuk and will continue to engage with all communities there. The Mission is committed to promoting a political and constitutional process that would be acceptable to the major stakeholders to resolve disputed internal boundaries, including the status of Kirkuk.

Regional developments pertaining to Iraq

9. During the reporting period Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates announced the resumption of full diplomatic representation in Iraq. In June the Organization of the Islamic Conference deployed a senior representative to Baghdad, pending the formal opening of its offices in August. At its 19 April meeting in Bahrain, the Gulf Cooperation Council accepted Iraq as a regular participant in ministerial meetings and resolved to regularly convene with a new configuration that also includes Egypt, Jordan and the United States of America. I look forward to the Iraqi Government and their counterparts in the region building forward-looking relationships that form the basis for addressing mutual interests.

10. At the third expanded Ministerial Conference of the Neighbouring Countries of Iraq, held in Kuwait on 22 April, support for the ad hoc support mechanism for regional dialogue increased and an agreement in principle was obtained to convene the next ministerial meeting in Baghdad. The high-level International Compact with Iraq Annual Review Conference, held in Stockholm on 29 May, also reflected engagement of the international community in favour of the reconstruction and development of Iraq and served to strengthen its relations with neighbouring countries. Subsequently, on 6 July, the United Arab Emirates announced that it would forgive Iraqi debt, which is an important and welcome contribution to the Compact process.

11. Turkish Prime Minister Recep Erdogan visited Baghdad on 10 July, the first visit by a Turkish Prime Minister in 18 years. During the visit, a border security pact was signed and steps to facilitate high-level contacts between the two countries were agreed upon. That visit was preceded by a trip by Iraqi President Jalal Talabani to Ankara and an official high-level meeting between the Turkish envoy to Iraq and Kurdistan regional government Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani on 2 May in Baghdad. Prime Minister Al-Maliki visited Tehran from 7 to 9 June. On 12 and 13 June, the Prime Minister visited Jordan and expressed his interest in strengthening bilateral relations in a number of key areas. From 6 to 8 July, he visited the United Arab Emirates and discussed business incentives and investment opportunities in Iraq.

III. Activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq

Political activities

12. During the reporting period, the Mission's work on disputed internal boundaries was an important part of my Special Representative's activities and the political activities of the Mission. In April and May, he undertook extensive outreach with several senior Iraqi interlocutors and international partners to advance discussions on the issue of disputed internal boundaries. The discussions intensified in early June prior to the presentation of the Mission's analysis to the Presidency Council and the Prime Ministers of Iraq and the Kurdistan regional government on 5 June. The Special Representative met with President Talabani, Vice-Presidents Adel Abdel Mahdi and Tariq al-Hashemi, several members of Parliament, the leaders of the Sadrist and Tawafuq Sunni political blocs, Arab, independent and other provincial representatives from Kirkuk, including members of the article 140 Committee, a delegation from the Kurdistan regional government assembly and the Kurdistan regional government Minister for Extraregional Affairs. My Special Representative also met with the Turkish Special Envoy for Iraq, Murat Ozcelik, as well as the Ambassadors to Iraq of the United States, the European Union and the Islamic Republic of Iran in Baghdad. The UNAMI political team prepared and complemented outreach of the Special Representative on disputed internal boundaries through a series of field visits to the disputed districts and a wide range of meetings.

13. My Special Representative continued outreach to prepare for the provincial elections and worked to promote progress on the conclusion of the electoral law by holding meetings with the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, Deputy Speaker Khaled al-Attiya, Independent High Electoral Commission Chief Electoral Officer Qassem Hassen Sajet and Acting Chairman of the Commission Amel Anwar Aref. The issue of elections was also addressed with other senior Iraqi interlocutors, including Prime Minister Al-Maliki.

14. On the regional front, in addition to accompanying the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs to the expanded Ministerial Conference of the Neighbouring Countries of Iraq, my Special Representative held a number of bilateral meetings in Amman, Baghdad and Kuwait to discuss issues related to further stabilization and development in Iraq. The meetings included the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Iraq, the Foreign Minister of Jordan and the Turkish special envoy for Iraq. Additional focus included the preparations for and participation in the first Annual Review Conference in Stockholm, which I attended and co-chaired with Prime Minister Al-Maliki. In preparation for the conference, my Special Adviser on the International Compact with Iraq and Other Political Issues and my Special Representative attended joint high-level meetings in Baghdad. From 18 to 20 June the Special Representative, accompanied by the Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs and members of the United Nations country team, visited Abu Dhabi to participate in the United States-sponsored Friends of Iraq conference on partnerships for economic reform.

15. My Special Representative hosted a number of high-level visitors to the Mission, including the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs on his first visit to Baghdad, from 19 to 21 April, my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and the Assistant Secretary-General for Field Support. On 21 May, my

Special Representative opened the first concert of the Baghdad Symphony Orchestra held since 2003. The orchestra played with a foreign conductor, and the initiative was designed to promote normalization and reconciliation in the country.

16. Additional activities included my Special Representative's attendance at the joint United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)/UNAMI donor conference in Copenhagen on the reintegration of former combatants along with the Director-General of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission from the Prime Minister's Office and the Acting Deputy Minister for Reconciliation, as well as dialogue with Government officials on the issue of an Iraqi national policy on refugees and returnees.

17. The deployment of national governorate liaison officers to Baghdad, Hillah, Najaf, Karbala, Ninawa, Qadisiyah, Muthanna, Dhi Qar, Salahaddin and Wassit governorates has contributed to the Mission's knowledge of those areas and multidimensional issues related to its mandate at the governorate level. Through further training initiatives, UNAMI plans to scale up this programme for 15 governorates of Iraq while continuing coverage of the three northern governorates in the Kurdistan regional government through the UNAMI regional office in Arbil.

Support for regional dialogue

18. The Mission worked with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to develop a workplan for the next cycle of working group meetings leading up to a ministerial conference expected to take place in Baghdad later in 2008. The Ministry's dedicated unit for the ad hoc support mechanism will play a pivotal role in preparing those events. The Mission continued to work closely with key counterparts in the Ministry to build capacity and has finalized arrangements for the deployment of an expert consultant on border security and a liaison officer to assist in the preparation of two important upcoming working-level meetings on security and border control. In the light of the upgrading of the support unit, the Ministry has requested specialized training for more senior personnel. UNAMI is working with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide appropriate training packages through the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and longer-term cooperation modalities between the Ministry's Diplomatic Institute and other external partners.

19. Together with the Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs, the Iraq Office of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recruited an officer for regional humanitarian coordination. In addition to working to implement the April 2008 decision by the Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs to launch a consolidated appeal for Iraq, a regional approach has been agreed upon aimed at: (a) establishing an informal information network for Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs regional coordinators in the Middle East covering key humanitarian, developmental and political issues arising from inside Iraq as well as from neighbouring countries affected by Iraq; and (b) providing a link for inputs and joint initiatives for the three working groups (refugees, energy and border security) established under the Iraq neighbours' dialogue.

Electoral assistance activities

20. UNAMI continues to work with the Independent High Electoral Commission in preparing to conduct election activities that will be seen as credible and that will be accepted by the Iraqi people. Iraq began its voter registration update as scheduled on 15 July with the striking achievement of opening all but 1 of the 564 voter registration centres on the first day. The voter registration update will run for 30 days and will give approximately 15 million eligible Iraqis the opportunity to verify their details and add new eligible voters to the provisional voters' list. The list will be finalized pending the Commission's rulings on complaints. The voter registration update will be followed by governorate council elections anticipated for later in 2008 in all of Iraq except the three northern governorates that form the Kurdistan regional government.

21. UNAMI has continued intensive consultations with the Independent High Electoral Commission, the Government of Iraq and members of the Iraq Council of Representatives to ensure the timely passage of a new election law. Passage of the law has been delayed owing to continuing discussions with political leaders on the status of Kirkuk, the election formula and provisions for the inclusion of women candidates on the ballot. In lieu of a new election law, the Independent High Electoral Commission approved voter registration eligibility criteria to ensure that the voter registration update could proceed as planned. The eligibility criteria give internally displaced persons the opportunity to register to vote in absentia. However, the Council of Representatives must adopt the new election law by the end of July in order to hold governorate council elections in 2008. Further slippage in the political timelines for passing key legislation will have a direct impact on electoral preparations.

22. During the reporting period, the Independent High Electoral Commission reached a number of operational milestones, most importantly solidifying a field structure needed to administer election activities throughout the country. In late May, the Commission appointed the eight remaining directors of the governorate election offices following a UNAMI-led selection process conducted by a panel of international experts. In addition, the Commission, with UNAMI support, selected and trained nearly 8,000 staff to provide voter registration services at 564 centres nationwide. Additional activities of the Commission included consultations with Iraqi civil society to encourage the registration of political entities and coalitions. UNAMI has also supported the Commission in putting in place transparent processes and strong oversight mechanisms and is encouraging the participation of domestic and party observers, who numbered in the hundreds of thousands in prior elections. More than 500 political party entities and coalitions have registered with the Commission to participate in the governorate council elections. The Commission, assisted by UNAMI, also developed a comprehensive public outreach strategy to inform Iraqis about voter registration and elections.

Constitutional support activities

23. The constitutional review process continues to face deadlock over the disputed issues being considered by the Constitutional Review Committee, such as the powers of the presidency, the powers of regions and governorates and oil and gas provisions. Committee members have expressed the view that those issues are [illegible]

The Chair of the Committee, Sheikh Humam Hammoudi, indicated to the UNAMI Office of Constitutional Support that the Committee may request a further extension of its mandate until the end of the year to address outstanding constitutional issues. In the meantime, it is anticipated that the Committee will finalize its report on the progress of the constitutional review, including an outline of those constitutional articles which it has been able to agree upon and those on which it has been unable to reach a consensus. The report is expected to be submitted to the Iraqi presidency and the President of the Kurdistan regional government shortly.

24. In early June the Director for Political, Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Affairs and former Director of the Office of Constitutional Support at UNAMI visited Baghdad and met with high-level interlocutors such as members of the Iraqi Presidency Council and the Constitutional Review Committee to discuss, among other issues, the constitutional review stalemate, options for moving the process forward and the technical basis for possible solutions. The Office of Constitutional Support suggested to the Iraqi leadership the need to identify linkages between issues, including disputed internal boundaries and a hydrocarbon revenue-sharing mechanism, in an attempt to produce a comprehensive political agreement on the constitutional amendments.

25. The Office of Constitutional Support continued to co-chair the International Legislative Round Table. Its seventh session was organized on 30 April on the theme of hydrocarbons, including both the legal and economic dimensions. In preparation for future round table discussions, meetings were held on 14 to 15 July to bring together representatives from key line ministries, including from the Ministry of Water Resources, and technical experts.

Human rights activities

26. The human rights situation in Iraq remains serious, although violations were less widely reported. Despite improved security conditions in Baghdad, Amarah and Mosul after operations against armed militias, UNAMI remained concerned about the physical safety and legal protection of hundreds of suspects arrested, as well as detention conditions and lack of due process following detention. Those apparently rounded up as suspects included a number of children.

27. During the military crackdown by Iraq and the multinational force in Iraq against militias in Sadr City in April and May, there was heavy fighting in this densely populated urban environment. According to several estimates, more than half of the 1,000 reportedly killed may have been civilians. Yet the real scale of civilian casualties was difficult to assess in the aftermath of the conflict, as most casualty data were not made available. UNAMI continued to investigate reports of incidents in which civilians were apparently targeted or where all sides to the conflict may have failed to make the distinction between combatants and civilians. This includes possible disproportionate attacks on civilian areas.

28. Numerous instances of abduction were reported, followed by ransom demands or killings, as were assassinations of targeted individuals, among them public officials. Journalists, educators, medical doctors, judges and lawyers remained prime targets for armed militia and criminal gangs. In another attempt to undermine the rule of law and the judiciary, coordinated bomb attacks on five judges took place in eastern Baghdad on 30 June and 1 July. On 2 July a sixth judge was attacked in

"accidents" and other suspected "honour crimes" also continued to be documented in the region of Kurdistan. The United Nations country team contributed to a report on gender-based violence in Iraq. A database containing more than 400 published reports revealed more than 21,000 cases in Iraq over the past five years. Given the severe and often fatal consequences for victims who report acts of sexual violence, the analysis indicates that only a fraction of the incidents are known.

29. The continuing conflict and resulting psycho-social impact of violence and deprivation on millions of Iraqi children is of tremendous concern. Violations against children are being committed on a large scale and include child recruitment, attacks on schools and hospitals, killing and maiming by indiscriminate attacks and lack of humanitarian access due to insecure conditions. Approximately 1,500 children are known to be held in detention facilities for alleged association with armed groups and in centres where they are mixed with adults. My Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict visited Iraq from 20 to 25 April 2008 to gain a first-hand understanding of the situation of children and to advocate for better protection of conflict-affected children. She noted that Iraqi children lacked access to education, health care and clean water. She was also very concerned by the use of children by armed groups as spies or messengers and, even more troubling, as soldiers and bomb planters or carriers. She met with high officials of the Government to assess how best to improve the protection of children in Iraq. In her discussions with UNAMI, it was agreed that greater efforts should be made on behalf of the Mission to address those issues through the appointment of child protection advisers. It was also agreed that consideration would be given to how the United Nations system could better monitor, assess and respond to human rights violations against children.

30. UNAMI continued to urge Iraqi Government officials to take effective and adequate measures to combat impunity, prosecute perpetrators of past human rights abuses and address the grievances of their victims. Concerns remain about reports of ongoing ill-treatment and torture of detainees by Iraqi law enforcement authorities and the denial of due process in criminal proceedings. The UNAMI Human Rights Office maintained its monitoring activities of criminal proceedings before the central criminal court of Iraq and criminal courts in the Kurdistan region, as well as visits to detention facilities under the authority of the Iraqi Government and the Kurdish authorities. By late June, UNAMI was seeking further information on the implementation of the general amnesty law, which entered into force on 27 February 2008. According to data provided by the Higher Judicial Council, as at 4 June some 86,214 persons were considered eligible under the terms of the amnesty, of whom 67,094 were released on bail or remained at large, while 19,120 others were detainees and convicted prisoners. It was unclear how many of those in the latter category had actually been released or whether they included detainees held in the custody of the multinational force in Iraq on criminal charges.

31. UNAMI continued to conduct field visits in the Kurdistan region, including to detention facilities, and to work with governmental and civil society counterparts on a range of human rights issues. These frequent and intensive contacts resulted in a number of positive changes and measures taken by the regional authorities aimed at improving the conduct of its law enforcement officials. Similar efforts are ongoing to expand the Mission's scope of activity at the governorate level elsewhere in Iraq, including Ramadi and Najaf, where the Human Rights Office participated in assessment missions.

32. The UNAMI programme of capacity-building and training for Government officials and civil society groups remained active. In a project launched recently by UNDP, with significant participation by the UNAMI Human Rights Office, plans are under way to establish model "pilot" courts to ensure a higher standard of judicial administration in Baghdad, Arbil and Basra. The project will also assist the Judicial Training Institute in curriculum development. In partnership with the Iraqi Bar Association, it will also set up legal aid clinics. Capacity-building and training activities were organized recently by UNAMI in the areas of human rights monitoring techniques for personnel of the Ministry of Human Rights, human rights mainstreaming for Iraqi Government officials and transitional justice concepts for Iraqi journalists. The Human Rights Office also continued to advise Government officials and parliamentarians on relevant draft legislation, including the draft law to establish an independent national Human Rights Commission.

Humanitarian assistance, reconstruction and development

33. At the first Iraq Compact Annual Review Conference, the Government of Iraq acceded to the Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness and additional items were agreed, including co-financing mechanisms, bilateral debt relief and support for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. UNAMI will continue to support the International Compact with Iraq secretariat in Baghdad and will undertake a review of its management to increase its effectiveness. Meanwhile, the United Nations country team will continue to align programmes with the International Compact with Iraq and review United Nations system programming to ensure greater Iraqi involvement.

34. The United Nations country team has developed an assistance strategy for Iraq for 2008-2010, which was presented to the Ministry of Planning and Development in April. By June, the strategy had received approval from an interministerial committee within the Government. Key to the new approach is the co-financing of projects between United Nations programmes, funds and agencies and the Government, aimed at leveraging Iraqi resources with United Nations technical support and capacity-building. United Nations agencies and their implementing partners have successfully concluded more than 60 projects, with an estimated 20 more to be completed during the next reporting period. In addition, increased capacity to undertake monitoring, evaluation and data-sharing has been achieved through support from donors and the UNDP Multi-Donor Trust Fund Office. I am grateful for the support of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq Donor Committee and the Government of Iraq in the effort to ensure targeted programming through evidence-based policy for the remaining $250 million in the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Iraq Trust Fund in support of the International Compact with Iraq and the national development strategy.

35. UNAMI continues to support the United Nations country team in expanding its humanitarian, reconstruction and development activities inside Iraq in line with Security Council resolution 1770 (2007). Both the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have now stationed representatives permanently in Baghdad. Offices in Arbil and Basra were also reinforced with additional staff.

36. The Iraq 2008 consolidated appeal for $267 million is 47 per cent funded, with $127 million. This amount includes a contribution by the Government of Iraq of

$40 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) to fund internally displaced Iraqis who are particularly vulnerable and the $8 million Iraq donated to UNHCR in Jordan for Iraqi refugees. Funding levels vary across sectors, with the most underfunded being health, water and sanitation, education, and agriculture and food security, which have received only about 13 per cent of the funding necessary for the delivery of essential services. Limited financial support has been received by non-governmental organizations participating in the consolidated appeal process, which is of concern, as their operations are crucial for reaching communities inside Iraq. I would like to thank the Governments of the United States, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Canada and other donors for their continued support to the consolidated appeal process.

37. Twenty-three Iraqi and international non-governmental organization projects were funded in the first half of 2008 by the Expanded Humanitarian Response Fund for Iraq, with grants of up to $400,000 to deliver emergency relief assistance to the most vulnerable Iraqis or those most affected by conflict. To date, 24 per cent of the $20 million requested ($4.8 million) has been contributed. The current balance stands at $1.7 million, and further funds are urgently needed. In June, an independent evaluation was carried out to further strengthen the efficiency, response capacity and transparency of the Fund. I would like to thank the Governments of Norway, the United Kingdom and Canada for their contributions during 2008.

38. Major security operations in Sadr City, Mosul and Amarah during the period under review prompted the United Nations country team to work closely on contingency plans for humanitarian emergency response. Access to basic commodities was at risk, particularly in Sadr City, where violence led to the temporary displacement of approximately 4,700 families. UNAMI engaged in targeted advocacy with the Government, the multinational force, Iraqi Security Forces and other actors to ensure humanitarian access prior to and during security operations. The coordination of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs with the International Committee of the Red Cross and other non-governmental organizations was important for unified country team monitoring and analysis. During the immediate response phase in the most acute of the three crises, the United Nations delivered water and sanitation assistance for an estimated 120,000 families in Sadr City. Sanitation agencies supplied 10 million litres of safe water to residents and hospitals, as well as water hygiene/purification kits. UNHCR provided non-food items to internally displaced persons and supported the repair of some 300 conflict-affected houses and shops in the Sadr City and Shula districts of Baghdad. WFP delivered 296 tons of emergency food to 38,500 residents of Sadr City, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) delivered 2,000 food baskets to hospitals in Sadr City and Shula. In addition, 1,500 food baskets were delivered to hospitals in Basra, Wassit, Babylon and Qadisiyah. In other interventions throughout the country WFP, together with non-governmental organization partners, reached 480,000 persons with food assistance during the reporting period. A further 42,500 persons were assisted in partnership with IOM. Currently, the United Nations country team has 15 water and sanitation rehabilitation projects in nine governorates at various stages of completion, benefiting approximately 3.5 million persons.

39. According to UNHCR and IOM, refugees and internally displaced persons continue to return to their places of origin at a steady rate of some 10,000 persons a month, and there has been no major incidence of displacement during the last

quarter. United Nations country team protection activities were led by UNHCR, the UNAMI Human Rights Office, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in cooperation with national and international non-governmental organizations. The protection sector has provided considerable technical support to the Ministry of Displacement and Migration in finalizing a national policy on internal displacement, scheduled to come into effect in July. Support to governorate branches of the Ministry, a project to strengthen emergency preparedness at the governorate level and assisting UNHCR-funded protection and assistance centres have been key country-wide activities. The protection of refugees in Iraq continued with the registration of Palestinian refugees in Baghdad (9,585 refugees as at 26 May).

40. The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the Parliament and United Nations country team agencies working in the area of health, held the first national health system conference in June, during which a vision for health sector policy reform was adopted and an increase in the national health budget was recommended. The Government reaffirmed its commitment to improve primary health care and its intention to provide quality public health services in line with international health standards.

41. WHO and UNICEF supported a vaccination drive for 239,000 children, which contained a measles outbreak. In April the cholera preparedness plan was revised and implemented by the Ministry of Health. In April, UNDP, WHO and UNICEF facilitated an international conference to address the delivery of basic social services in the Kurdistan region and reduce the risk of outbreaks of cholera and other waterborne diseases. WHO led health education campaigns in schools throughout the country and conducted psycho-social interventions and health screening of doctors and teachers in 150 schools across eight governorates.

42. The United Nations country team shelter sector coordinated response efforts to meet the urgent needs of internally displaced persons, including the distribution of non-food items and the rehabilitation of homes or commercial spaces. UNHCR, in conjunction with implementing partners, rehabilitated 311 housing units in Baghdad, including Sadr City, with another 300 being completed or under way in Basra and Mosul. Advocacy on the part of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) resulted in the establishment of an emergency shelter committee and the allocation of $12 million by the Ministry of Construction and Housing for house rehabilitation in Sadr City. UN-Habitat has supported the development of the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Housing.

43. In addition to 17 ongoing education projects funded by the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, United Nations country team agencies working in the area of education started repairs on 14 out of 22 damaged schools in Sadr City. In Basra, the Ministry of Education reported 49 affected schools, 5 of which were being repaired by UN-Habitat. UN-Habitat is also working on schools in Najaf and Samawa, while UNICEF has projects in Sadr City, Babylon, Karbala, Missan and Kirkuk. UNICEF continues to focus on accelerated learning programmes for students whose education has been interrupted.

44. In May, United Nations country team agencies with expertise in agriculture facilitated the training of staff at the Ministry of Agriculture, working closely with members of the State Board for Agricultural Research and the State Board for Seed

To improve agricultural productivity, a study on the rehabilitation and maintenance of traditional irrigation systems was completed and a database created for information on pumping stations affecting 110 irrigation and 78 drainage stations. Training in good agricultural practices in the Syrian Arab Republic was accomplished for the date palm sector.

45. Agencies now working on economic reform and diversification include UNDP, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, IOM and UNOPS, as well as international non-governmental organizations. Following discussions with the Government, those agencies have prioritized their activities within a framework of a private sector development programme, which began promoting reform and diversification through private enterprise and sustainable employment. The first meeting of the high-level round table on economic reform took place on 1 and 2 July with the participation of key ministries and other economic institutions. The meeting established a coordination mechanism on economic reform to enable the Government to better articulate its partnership with the United Nations, donors, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, in line with the International Compact with Iraq.

46. On 7 July, the seventh International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq Donor Committee meeting was held for the first time in Baghdad and was attended by the Deputy Special Representative for Humanitarian Affairs and many members of the United Nations country team. The main focus of the meeting was on defining the strategic direction of the Facility. Donors reiterated their support for the Facility as a means of providing capacity development and technical assistance to the Government of Iraq and welcomed efforts by the United Nations to restructure its coordination mechanism and refocus its strategic programming to ensure its alignment with the International Compact.

47. As at 30 June 2008, the total contribution to the UNDG Iraq Trust Fund, one of the two funds of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq, equalled $1.34 billion. A total of 141 projects valued at $1.11 billion had been approved for funding under the Trust Fund. Continuing the significant progress in implementation, commitments worth cumulatively $873 million (79 per cent of approved funding) had been entered into and $757 million (68 per cent of approved funding) had been disbursed as at 31 May. Monthly financial updates are made available on the Facility's website (www.irffi.org). Contributions in the second quarter to the UNDG Trust Fund included $4.7 million from the Government of Australia.

Operational, logistical and security issues

48. During the reporting period and for the 2009 budget submission, the Mission prepared projects for the next year, such as the construction of a new UNAMI integrated headquarters in Baghdad, which is subject to the approval of the General Assembly. In that connection, UNAMI received a letter from the Government of Iraq in June granting its approval for the Mission to use a parcel of land for the next 25 years on which the new United Nations integrated headquarters will be built. Meanwhile, construction of overhead protection at the UNAMI interim accommodation facility in Baghdad has been completed.

49. Support to the Mission to facilitate engagement with Iraqi interlocutors under Security Council resolution 1770 (2007) has been provided during the reporting period. Assessment visits to discuss the possibility of expanding the United Nations presence have been conducted in Najaf, Mosul and Ramadi. The Logistics Civilian Augmentation Programme and the related "607 agreement" with the multinational force in Iraq are being considered as the basis for supporting such expansion. In addition to the UNAMI regional office in Arbil and the presence in Basra, the newly established presence in Kirkuk has provided improved support for outreach on political affairs, human rights, humanitarian affairs, reconstruction and development.

50. Nationally, the number of violent incidents recorded declined during the reporting period to 40 to 50 attacks a day, excluding areas of declared military operations. The impact has been particularly notable in Baghdad, where much of the day-to-day fighting has now subsided. However, in recent weeks, attacks have targeted local Government facilities, where meetings have been held with the multinational force in Iraq or civilian international partners. On 26 June, a WHO national staff member was very seriously injured when an improvised explosive device detonated under his private vehicle in Baghdad.

51. Only 1 indirect fire attack occurred in June against the International Zone, compared with 50 strikes in April and May. Such incidents in Baghdad are usually tied to Shia militia groups operating in and around Sadr City. Widespread military control measures and restraint urged by the Sadrist bloc are the key factors responsible for this dramatic drop in attacks on the International Zone and other locations. Nevertheless, the capability of armed opposition groups to launch indirect fire attacks remains. Notably, during the period under review there were sporadic indirect fire attacks against Basra air station, which continued to threaten the safety of UNAMI staff members at that location.

52. Diyala Province in north-central Iraq continued to experience daily attacks against Government, security and international elements. Similar patterns were observed in Kirkuk, where targeted assassinations occurred against law enforcement and other officials. Ansar al-Sunnah and numerous other affiliates are still present and capable of carrying out deadly attacks. The western region continues to attract low levels of violent activity, with support from the local community in identifying suspicious activity and alerting the Iraqi Security Forces or multinational force in Iraq. However, Al-Qaida in Iraq maintains a presence in Anbar, and appears intent on continuing attacks against tribal groups that are cooperating with the local or international security forces.

53. The UNAMI Safety and Security Unit continues to enhance its capabilities, improve its operational self-reliance and expand its capacity by recruiting suitably qualified protection officers. However, further strengthening of the Unit will be required in the coming months to meet the many operational demands being placed on it.

54. Since my previous report, the United Nations has received further financial contributions to support the "distinct entity" that operates under the command of the multinational force and has a dedicated mission to provide security for UNAMI. I would like to thank Germany and Finland for their intentions to contribute $500,000 and €500,000 respectively to the distinct entity trust fund. These important

contributions will help to ensure that the distinct entity is well-resourced until early 2009.

IV. Agreements

55. The presence of the multinational force in Iraq is currently authorized by the Security Council at the request of the Government of Iraq, and, as stated in resolutions 1546 (2004), 1637 (2005) and 1723 (2006), the Council will review the mandate at the request of the Government. Bilateral discussions between the Governments of Iraq and of the United States are currently taking place with regard to a status-of-forces agreement. It should be recalled that in accordance with resolutions 1546 (2004), 1637 (2005), 1723 (2006) and 1770 (2007), security is essential in order for the United Nations to be able to function in Iraq. It is therefore necessary that any new arrangements beyond 31 December 2008 take into account the security of the United Nations presence in Iraq.

V. Observations

56. Thanks to concerted political and military efforts over the past three months, there has been continued improvement in the security situation across Iraq. However, the gains made so far need to be sustained through meaningful political dialogue and national reconciliation. Time is of the essence, and Iraq can no longer afford continued delays in finding viable political solutions. Long-term stability will require significant political buy-in from all segments of the population, many of which are not yet fully engaged in the political process.

57. UNAMI will continue to assist the Independent High Electoral Commission in planning to conduct governorate council elections that will be seen as credible and fair and will be accepted by the Iraqi people. For elections to take place in 2008, the electoral law must be passed by the end of July. I call upon the members of the Council of Representatives to reach agreement on the draft law as soon as possible. I am convinced that holding elections this year is an important political development for Iraq, and failure to pass the requisite law in time would deprive Iraqis of the possibility of participating in local political life and voting this year, which could alienate a number of communities.

58. I am also hopeful that Iraq will take further steps to strengthen its human rights protection system so that improvements to public safety do not come at the expense of civic freedoms or the protection of civilians in accordance with international humanitarian law. All security forces in Iraq must continue to do their utmost to avoid civilian casualties and the disproportionate use of force in civilian areas. The wider human rights situation in Iraq also continues to be alarming. Abductions followed by ransom demands or killings and assassinations of targeted individuals persist. Journalists, educators, doctors, judges and lawyers remain prime targets for armed militia and criminal gangs. Gender-based violence in Iraq is also a deep concern.

59. The issue of disputed internal boundaries remains a priority for the Mission. UNAMI has worked assiduously to carry out its assistance mandate in this area with a view to preventing conflict and facilitating constructive political dialogue. I

strongly encourage Iraqi authorities and political stakeholders to explore opportunities that will be presented through the forthcoming UNAMI efforts to move forward on the delicate issue of disputed internal boundaries. In addition to consulting with Government authorities, UNAMI has taken care to work closely with all affected populations, and especially minority groups, to ensure that their views are taken into consideration through an impartial analysis. I am hopeful that Iraqi solutions, once formulated, will in the end be acceptable to all.

60. As this process is set to continue in the coming months, linkages with outstanding constitutional issues will be actively explored to reach a comprehensive solution on a range of issues, such as power-sharing and wealth-sharing. The Government of Iraq and the United Nations will continue to strive for a credible constitutional reform process. UNAMI is prepared to offer additional expertise and provide platforms for political dialogue that promote stable State administration and a more functional constitutional order. The aim is to encourage the parties concerned to see the wisdom of finding collective solutions rather than unilateral ones, which have the best chances of ensuring a lasting peace.

61. The success of the Stockholm conference on the International Compact with Iraq, with over 100 delegations attending, sent a strong message of support to the Government of Iraq and its people for pursuing a course towards economic reform, security consolidation and political regeneration in the country. Those steps can serve as an important basis for tackling the most daunting challenges facing the country. The Government of Iraq has made it clear that it needs advice and partnership to tap into its considerable human and material resources and not merely additional international funding. Rising levels of oil income also offer an opportunity to improve the management and accountability of the country's financial resources. In this context, I encourage Member States and the Government of Iraq to redouble their efforts to ensure further progress in the implementation of the Compact.

62. Priority must be given to addressing the basic needs of Iraqis. The provision of essential services is still lacking, fuel shortages remain widespread in a country with vast oil reserves and job creation remains vital. Although Iraq forecasts around 7 per cent growth for 2008, the new wealth has not lifted many Iraqis out of poverty or reduced unemployment levels. Meanwhile, the public sector has doubled to over 2 million employees. It is in this context that I am pleased to announce a new United Nations programme, led by UNDP in conjunction with the Government of Iraq, which is about to begin to help create jobs and address the obstacles that impede businesses from expanding and developing. This is being done with the backing of OECD. I am also pleased that UNHCR and WHO have now stationed their heads of office permanently in Baghdad, and that the United Nations country team continues to expand its presence and activities inside Iraq. I encourage them to continue this trend.

63. Increased oil revenues are providing the Government of Iraq with new-found resources to assist the people of Iraq. In this regard, while new commitments by the Government for relief for internally displaced persons are very much welcomed, I would urge the Government to develop modalities to assist the Iraqi refugee community in the region in concert with neighbouring host countries, which have already shouldered a great burden for many years.

64. The growing number of Arab States that have expressed their willingness to re-establish a diplomatic presence in Baghdad is a positive development. The decision of the United Arab Emirates to forgive Iraqi debt is a strong step that I hope is taken by others in the region. I very much hope that efforts to promote coordination and cooperation on regional stability will intensify.

65. I would like to commend the Government of Iraq for responding to this challenge by further developing its ad hoc support mechanism for regional dialogue. The Iraqi Foreign Ministry is committed to enhancing its capabilities for professional servicing and follow-up of regional ministerial meetings and technical working groups. UNAMI will continue to provide more technical assistance to the process and to use its good offices to strengthen relations between Iraq and its neighbours through mutually beneficial partnerships.

66. During the reporting period, UNAMI has made progress in increasing its self-reliance. However, the Mission still depends on Member States for security, logistical, operational and financial support. I am grateful to those Member States, and in particular to Georgia, Fiji, the Republic of Korea, South Africa and Ukraine, for providing security and operational support. I would also like to encourage Member States to consider a request to provide UNAMI with additional military advisers, who are essential for the planned expansion of the Mission's presence and activities beyond its current locations in Iraq.

67. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to my Special Representative for Iraq, Staffan de Mistura, for his commitment and dynamic leadership. I would also like to extend my special thanks to the Mission's national and international staff, as well as the personnel of United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, for their dedicated work in fulfilling their mandated tasks under difficult conditions.